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BOSTON COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

A 16825

Summary of Meeting on February 24, 1953

Speaker: Sir Carl Berendsen

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Members present: Roy Argersinger Henry Shattuck
Vincent Estabrook Donovan Richardson
Russell Harris Robert Stewart
Richard B. Johnson Walter Powers
William R. Knox George Blodgett
Laurence Lombard David Scannell
James T. Mountz William M. Wood
Loomis Patrick Willis Van Devanter

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In speaking of the problems of the Pacific, we speak of the Western Pacific. This implies that there is--at the moment--nothing to worry about in the Eastern Pacific area. This discussion will cover the problems of the general area extending from Pakistan to Japan--one of the three major trouble spots in the world today. Specifically, this is an area of forces in "imbalance". It is a backward and a have-not area on the whole, and, as a generalization, the vast majority of the area doesn't know from where the next meal is coming. The situation is not stable and could not be made stable. We have only lately begun to do something about it. In this, Point IV aid from the United States plays a part. But, in all, there is nothing which can be done now to affect materially what can happen there. We are working very late in the area. For these people know what they are missing. They now know there can be a better life--and they aspire to it. More than that, of course, is the intense feeling of nationalism supported by a bitter resentment with what these people believe has been manipulation by the West.

This area has just beaten back a quite unprovoked attack by Japan-unprovoked, despite the domestic problems of Japan which could have been more satisfactorily handled with an enlightened appreciation of Japan's trading problem. The United States stands at the bottom of the list when it comes to help in solving the problems of world trade. As a result, the United States now bears the brunt of the costs for the Pacific War.

Parenthetically, the United States strategy and fighting in the Pacific was the best in history--both in conception of the problems and fulfillment of operation. It was a brilliant naval campaign. Moreover, there never was a better occupation than that of the United States in Japan. But nobody believes, or should believe, that Japan is pacified. The area, of which Japan is merely an example, is a danger zone which the United States seems to appreciate periodically. Is the Pacific only a hobby for the United States?

The major fears of the area at present are two: 1) resurgent Japan and 2) a resurgent Germany. The creation of Anzus was to remove the apprehension of New Zealand and Australia, particularly in regard to the first fear, but indirectly the second. Both nations felt unprotected and small. They feared a rearmed Japan but, at the same time, did not question a policy of opposition to the Soviet Union. The area had been caught unprotected before, when Japan struck while Australia and New Zealand and strength was thousands of miles away, fighting the Nazi war machine. Anzus is a guarantee which allows New Zealand some freedom of action--for though "puny" militarily, in proportionate losses of manpower in the last war, New Zealand was one of the most heavily New Zealand has never shirked from international responsibility. It now desires

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some type of limited protection so that it may continue its tradition. It needs no economic aid; it may, someday, require military aid.

Aside from Japan, what does one see from the New Zealand and Australian viewpoint?

1. Pakistan and India.

Both have problems which they are not yet competent to handle. India is faced with chronic famine; Pakistan is finding food a difficult problem. Both nations are in difficulty in deciding on the Communist issue. In this respect India is "shockingly off the ball at the moment."

Its foreign policy is "unrealistic", It is "self-righteous, self-seeking, and self-destructive."

2. Burma

It is open to the same Communist threat and infiltration as are India and Pakistan.

3. Indonesia

This nation received independence long before it was ready for it. The internal threats are constant. It, too, is trying to ride two horses - the Russian and that of the West.

4. Siam

The help they have offered in Korea is a realistic appraisal of what they'll later need.

5. Indo-China

The cost of defending this area is tremendous.

6. Philippines

Facing an open communist threat in the Huk movement.

7. China

There are two problems involved immediately here:

1. Should the Communist government be recognized?
2. Should Peiping authority be accepted at the United Nations?

In regard to the first problem, traditional international law leads to the idea of recognition. This approach should be passed. It is a law based on force (i.e. who holds power is recognized). The test should be right, not might. The true test is the "consent of the governed." Aside from legality, should the government be recognized. Great Britain recognized the Communist government; did she gain thereby? Britain in some ways was forced to recognize the Communists. She alone held the fort against aggression from 1939 through 1941. The political-economic effects of this defense were colossal. This is a very honorable and important aspect of the British recognition of the Chinese Communists. Trade is an essential motive of the British recognition. A third is its foreign office, steeped in the formalities of international politics. Despite this, what has Britain gained? Insult!

In regard to recognizing the Peiping representatives to the United Nations; we have a dilemma, on the one hand it is "quite absurd" to have China represented by the Formosan group, but, on the other, it would be "wicked in the last degree" to allow the Reds to represent China.

8. Korea

It was a major error of the United States when it walked out of Korea. Another error was the original decision on the 38th parallel demarcation line. Despite this, the manner in which the United States and the rest of the world answered the Korean challenge was "the most encouraging thing in my lifetime". However, once the attack had been launched, it might have been better if the United States and the other fighting members had been pushed out of Korea. Our successful defense has left us with almost unsolvable problems. There have been many critical and difficult decisions to make during this conflict:

1. Were we right in facing the Korean problem and answering it as we did? Of course. This was the sober decision of 53 United Nations members.

2. Were we right in going over the 38th parallel? Of course. We still have the duty to unite Korea.

3. Why didn't we anticipate the Chinese offensive? The answer lies in history.

4. Why did China attack? As part of a world-wide communist plan. That China feared United States aggression is answerable by a "good Anglo-Saxon word".

5. Should we have bombed Manchuria? I thought so at the time--but now I do not know.

6. What happened after Korea? There may not be an "after Korea". This thing may go on and on and on. An agreement on Korea is "poppy-cock". If we make an agreement, then what do we do? Do we withdraw our troops again? Or do we leave our troops there?--if so, do we leave our best troops? When and if Korea ends, there will be more Koreas, there seems no doubt of it. War is certainly not inevitable, but it is probable.

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"One gentlemen's opinion" to all of this, and especially to the problems of what we should do in the face of a world-wide communist plan, would be briefly along the following lines:

Crisis problems can occur or be created anywhere in some 50 key places at the present time. We should first of all sort out those who are with us. Of those we should sort out those who are worth the "tin of fish". We should forget the "resolution makers" and limit our action to those who will do something. Having done this, we must create real strength in military forces. We must take those who really count in this strife for liberty (and there aren't many) and hold together firmly and forget our differences. Thirdly, despite the fact that I consider myself a cynic and a realist, I am convinced that nothing can be useful unless it is morally right. Our action, then, must be to resist the wrong as we can, when we can. If we don't we'll be "separately enslaved or annihilated."

DISCUSSION

1. How does the talked-of Eisenhower policy of disengaging United States troops in the Far East strike you?

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"In my day", the South Koreans were not fighting men if left by themselves. Now, they say they are. This strictly a military problem. We'll need some troops elsewhere before we're through with Korea. If Koreans can militarily take the "Bull by the tail", we should encourage it.

2. How does patience stand as a necessary quality in defeating the Russians? In other words, can we depend upon Russian internal problems to help us?

Maybe. But I don't see just sitting back and hoping.

3. How do you decide where we are going to resist (fight) and under what conditions? In your talk you have described a group of allies with whom we can strongly and successfully meet the Soviet challenge. How can we reach an agreement as to the nature of "our" interests when the alliance is formed of nations with interests so diverse?

A key problem. First of all we should not fight on the east coast of Asia. I have always told my people (New Zealand) not to get involved in a commitment on the mainland of Asia. Basically, this problem calls for a coordinating body comparable to the Combined Chiefs of Staff of World War II.

4. Who do you consider we can count on for a central core?

Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Turkey, Greece, United States, Philippines, perhaps Israel. This would not include France, West Germany or South Africa.

5. How can this group sustain a long war if France and Germany are not on our side?

We did it once. We are not going to be worse off than in the last war. Our cause is right and that counts a great deal.

6. Does this mean NATO is a losing gamble?

NATO is a "finesse worth trying". Let's get as much war-like material together as we can. Be prepared at all costs.

7. Should the United States move to disassociate itself with French colonial policy?

I think that there is a lot of sense to the French remark "If you want to use our airfields, for God's sake help us keep them".

But in the long run these colonies in North Africa are going to become independent--why not hop on the bandwagon?

You have no guarantee that they will be on your side. They won't be--they'll probably go Communist. The French statement is very good (as above).

8. How can you justify this in the light of your earlier statement on the necessity of being "morally right"?

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You have to choose the time and place to impose the right. Right doesn't necessarily prevail. You have to bide your time until the time indicates that you will succeed in what is right.

Doesn't our policy in regard to Tito come close to this?

Yes - that backs up my argument.

The following interchange took place among the members:

But if you put it on a moral basis, you must eliminate a lot of friends. We are all on a self-interest basis, are we not.

On the other hand, the real strength of the Korean decision was that everyone thought it was the right thing to do.

9. What was behind the 38th parallel decision?

This was a very stupid mistake, but it looks differently now than then. The same moral situation arose when the Russians went to war with Germany. New Zealand supported the Russians--anybody against the devil. The Far East decision at Yalta was similar to this. The decision on the 38th parallel in a sense implemented it.

10. What kind of a settlement can we expect in Europe, in the light of your scepticism on France and fear of Germany?

We're going to have to dig them out. The only solution is a military one.

Then the solution in the Far East is dependent on a military victory in Europe?

Yes--barring unforeseeable events in Russia--but I don't count on that.

11. If you don't trust the Japs and the Germans, what do you do after the defeat of the Communists?

I want true collective security with a force in being to carry out the law as determined by the group. After a Third World War this might be possible. No big nation wants it now. But history is on our side--also natural political evolution. Every political community has a force to support its law. I thought we were coming to this at the time of the Korean War. But how many of the 53 nations who voted in favor of Korean action actually supported it - 13. The United States sustains 90% of the casualties and the material support. The next "Korea" won't even find 13 nations supporting a decision--if one is ever made. The only hope now is security based on a regional basis along the line of Atlantic Union.

12. But how do you make the political decisions of a world organization. What nation will allow others to determine its choice?

Two absurdities in the United Nations are the veto and the concept of "one nation, one vote" in the Assembly. I suggest that the vote be weighted in proportion to a nation's financial contribution to the central organization.

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13. Is there any possibility of Titoism in China?

It's been dinned in my ears--but I don't see many defections within the Russian orbit in the last 25 years. You can't tell the Chinese "reformers" from Communists.

14. Do you feel free to comment on reports that the United Kingdom is upset by the tripartite rather than a quadripartite arrangement in Anzus which would have included the United Kingdom?

Of course the British were upset. New Zealand needed protection which Britain no longer could give; New Zealand much preferred to have the British in the pact--but all sorts of obstacles arose to this. For instance, if the British get in, the French "what in" to guarantee Caledonia. How about Hong Kong? We didn't want to protect Hong Kong. How about the Dutch? And meanwhile, while you're trying to work this out, we needed defense. Who personally or which of the nations, finally made the decision to keep Britain out, I don't know--but we needed protection immediately.

15. Was the price of the Japanese treaty signature the Anzus agreement?

Yes, but I wouldn't put it that way.

16. Does this emphasis on the Anzus treaty and in your talk really mean that the basis of security is regional agreements rather than changes to the United Nations?

There is no means of change in the United Nations. Therefore, we are forced to go into regional arrangements.

There is "no way whatsoever" to change the United Nations. Even if there were neither this country nor any other of importance would change it. We are not ready for collective security.

17. Is New Zealand in a stronger position with Anzus than with the United Nations?

Yes. There are less members but it is a real and workable guarantee. Such regional groups will work under a chain reaction. For instance, if New Zealand is in trouble, Britain's in trouble. If Britain is in trouble, the Commonwealth is involved. If the United States is involved, almost certainly Anzus, the Commonwealth, South America (for all that's worth) and NATO will be involved. South American will not help much but it will be a nuisance if against us.

18. How do you recognize governments on the basis of "consent of the governed"?

There are difficulties. Those now recognized--let pass. The new arrivals should face the new criteria.

19. What's going to happen in Japan?

They will probably rearm, cause trouble, and I wouldn't be surprised if they cooperated with the Communists. What can they do if they have no place to sell surplus goods.

Thrice in our time we have been attacked by a prepared aggressor. He was prepared because he planned the occasion.

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